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VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
9300 E. Hampton Drive  
Capitol Heights, MD 20743

Re: PS Docket Nos. 11-153 and  
10-255

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The Boulder Regional Emergency Telephone Service Authority (“BRETSA”) supports the Commission’s proposal to adopt an order requiring CMRS providers to provide text-messaging to 9-1-1 to their customers, in areas where PSAPs request the service. Text-to-9-1-1 capability will be important for the speech and hearing impaired community, in silent call situations, when voice calls to 9-1-1 are blocked, and when people in need of assistance cannot acquire an adequate wireless signal to place a voice call but can transmit a text message.

Some parties have urged the Commission to require providers to transmit “bounce back messages” advising users to *call* 9-1-1 when they are not in an area where the PSAP can receive text messages. BRETSA believes that *all* users attempting to transmit a text message to 9-1-1 should be prompted to call 9-1-1 if it is possible to safely do so. BRETSA also urges the Commission to facilitate the delivery of text-to-9-1-1 message contents to *all* PSAPs. Finally, the Commission should address text messages to international short-codes which are equivalent to “9-1-1,” and text messaging originated over VoIP services.

In the ordinary case, a voice call will be the most efficient and expeditious means of conveying emergency information to a PSAP. Voice calls also provide valuable information such as the tone of the callers voice and background sounds, and better enable the PSAP call-taker to calm the caller and ask for the most critical information first. Thus, users sending text messages to 9-1-1 should *always* be prompted to place a voice call instead.

Marlene H. Dortch  
November 16, 2012  
Page 2

The great value of the 9-1-1 system is its ubiquity. This will not be the case with text-to-9-1-1 in the near term unless the Commission acts to facilitate it. The value of non-ubiquitous text-to-9-1-1 is further limited by the essentially mobile nature of the service.

To facilitate the ubiquity of text-to-9-1-1, the Commission must expressly permit any PSAP to designate to wireless providers an alternate PSAP or third-party vendor ("Designee") to receive text-to-9-1-1 messages originating in its jurisdiction. The Commission must also expressly permit Designees to transmit the message content to the destination PSAP via TTY, e-mail, voice call, or forwarding the text-message to a smartphone obtained by the destination PSAP for that purpose. A Designee could even act as a remote call-taker, interact with people communicating by text-to-9-1-1, and transmit CAD incident files to the destination PSAP for dispatch.

The Commission must also make also expressly provide that Designees may convert message format and transmission media to that approved by the destination PSAP. The Commission may also need to provide, or require text-to-9-1-1 be available only in states which provide, limited immunity for Designees, to make the service affordable for PSAPs. Designees should not face civil liability for damages or injuries from acts or omissions in providing the service, *unless* the damage or injury was intentionally caused by or resulted from gross negligence of the Designee.

Any "bounce-back" messages or prompts should be conformed across providers and jurisdictions to avoid user confusion and facilitate public education

Finally, wireless providers currently transmit to PSAPs calls placed to international short-code equivalents to 9-1-1, generally by foreign tourists. Systems are in place to provide for translation of foreign *spoken* language calls to 9-1-1, but not for foreign language *text messages* to 9-1-1. In addition, some interconnected VoIP providers offer SMS text messaging to their VoIP customers. To avoid ambiguity, the Commission should address in its Order the application of the requirements it adopts to text messages to foreign short-code equivalents to 9-1-1, and VoIP text-to-9-1-1 messages.

Very truly yours,



Joseph P. Benkert

*Attorney for the Boulder Emergency Telephone Service Authority*